

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10. (Canceled).

Claim 11. (Previously presented) A method of distributing data in accordance with requests from a plurality of users, said method comprising:

storing information in an electronic form to publish a list of its contents on a home page of a data distribution center;

connecting each of said users with the home page of said data distribution center to retrieve available information;

transmitting, from said users, a data request signal to said data distribution center if there is information desired on the basis of a result of retrieval, said data request signal designating an allowable waiting time interval until data is distributed; and

distributing, from said data distribution center, data requested by said data request signal, to said plurality of users via a communication satellite within said allowable waiting time interval designated by said data request signal.

Claim 12. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claimed 11, wherein when said allowable waiting time interval designated by said data request signal is instant, said distributing step comprises distributing, from said data distribution center, data requested by said data request signal via said communication satellite as soon as possible.

Claim 13. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claimed 11, wherein when said allowable waiting time interval designated by said data request signal is not instant, said

distributing comprises:

returning, from said data distribution center, a reservation signal to subscriber's terminals for said users via said communication satellite, said reservation signal including a request source's ID, a group address, and a distribution scheduled time instant;

setting up, in said subscriber's terminals receiving said reservation signal, the group address and the distribution scheduled time instant assigned to its own satellite reception equipment to put said subscriber's terminals receiving said reservation signal into a reception waiting state;

returning, from said users, a reservation confirmation signal to said data distribution center;

distributing, from said data distribution center receiving said reservation confirmation signal, a decipher key distribution signal to said users, said decipher key distribution signal including the request source's ID, the group address, and a data decipher key; and

broadcasting, from said data distribution center, data with said group address via said communication satellite at said distribution scheduled time instant.

Claim 14. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claimed 13, further comprising:

receiving, in each of said subscriber's terminals, data including the group address assigned to its own station as received data at a time instant designated;

deciphering, in each of said subscriber's terminals, said received data using said data decipher key to produce deciphered data; and

storing, in each of said subscriber's terminals, said deciphered data in a memory

thereof.

Claim 15. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claimed 14, wherein returning said reservation signal comprises:

when said allowable waiting time interval designated by said data request signal is within a predetermined time interval, checking, in said data distribution center, whether or not a reservation for the same data is already present;

when said reservation is absent, reserving, in said data distribution center, distribution for said data in question after said predetermined time interval is elapsed, and preparing said reservation signal by selecting a new group address to return said reservation signal to said users via said communication satellite; and

when said reservation is already present, returning, from said data distribution center, said reservation signal including its scheduled time instant and the group address to said users via said communication satellite.

Claim 16. (Previously presented) A data distribution system comprising:

a communication satellite;

a plurality of satellite communication terminals enabled to receive a signal from said communication satellite;

a satellite earth station for carrying out a principal communication via said communication satellite;

a data distribution center connected to said satellite earth station by a communication channel; and

a data communication network for connecting said data distribution center and a database for information collection, wherein:

said data distribution center comprises an electronic library for storing collected information in an electronic form, said electronic library presenting stored contents to users of said satellite communication terminals to submit retrieval of said users, said electronic library supplying information requested in accordance with a data request signal from said users,

each satellite communication terminal comprises means for transmitting a data request signal with a time limit to said data distribution center, and

said data distribution center further comprises means for distributing, in response to the data request signal from each satellite communication terminal, desired data to said satellite communication terminals via said satellite earth station and said communication satellite within the time limit designated.

Claim 17. (Previously presented) The data distribution system as claimed in claim 16, further comprising a ground communication network for connecting said data distribution center with each satellite communication terminal.

Claim 18. (Previously presented) The data distribution system as claimed in claim 16, wherein said data communication network comprises the Internet.

Claim 19. (Previously presented) A data distribution method in a data distribution system comprising:

a communication satellite;

a plurality of satellite communication terminals enabled to receive a signal from said communication satellite;

a satellite earth station for carrying out a principal communication via said communication satellite;

a data distribution center for connecting said satellite earth station by a communication channel; and

a data communication network for connecting said data distribution center and a database for information collection, wherein

said data distribution center comprises an electronic library storing collected information in an electronic form, said electronic library presenting stored contents to users of said satellite communication terminals, said electronic library supplying information requested in accordance with a data request signal from said users,

said data distribution method comprising:

transmitting, from each satellite communication terminal, a data request signal with a time limit to said data distribution center; and

distributing, from said data distribution center, in response to the data request signal from each satellite communication terminal, desired data to the plurality of satellite communication terminals via said satellite earth station and said communication satellite within the time limit designated.

Claim 20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein, when said allowable waiting time interval is not instant, said distributing comprises:

returning a reservation signal from said data distribution center to said subscriber's

terminals for said users via said communication satellite, wherein said reservation signal includes a request source's ID, a group address, and a distribution scheduled time instant.

Claim 21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said distributing further comprises:

setting up the group address and the distribution scheduled time instant assigned to the satellite reception equipment of said subscriber's terminals receiving said reservation signal to put said subscriber's terminals receiving said reservation signal into a reception waiting state.

Claim 22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said distributing further comprises:

returning a reservation confirmation signal from said users to said data distribution center.

Claim 23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein said distributing further comprises:

distributing a decipher key distribution signal from said data distribution center receiving said reservation confirmation signal to said users.

Claim 24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein said decipher key distribution signal comprises the request source's ID, the group address, and a data decipher key.